29 November 1972

Dear Harold:

Yesterday we sent you some clippings, including the SU killings to that date, and will keep them coming. We're interested, of course, but with no likely prospect of using them, it's much better that you should have them. And better to send them along as they appear than to hold them here. If you need 'em you'll have 'em.

Your letters are all here through 31. I checked, and both 22 and 22-2 which you asked about came in okay.

A typically screwy schedule this last week. The AP week begins on Sunday, which I worked. ~~Tuesday was off.~~ Monday was off; I worked Tuesday and will work today and tomorrow, have Friday off, and wind up Saturday. Everyone goes through this sort of routine because of too small a staff which permits little flexibility for the schedule maker.

We'll pass the tapes you offer on Buckley-McMillan and Agronsky-Bradlee-Small. We already have three of your tapes which we haven't had time to listen to. Thanks. For once I find myself in agreement with Buckley, about Khrushchev's lack of power as a front man for a collective leadership. That was demonstrated when JFK was killed and within months K faded because he no longer could trade on his contacts with JFK, especially after the way he had to back down during the Cuban missile crisis.

But we would like, when you get it, the full quote of Mitchell about Katie Graham. I felt at the time it had been cleaned up considerably.

And we'll also pass the tape of the two pollsters. Again, no time. And I hardly think it worth the trouble to send the paperback of The Making of the President 1968 for the Anna Chennault meddling. I always can look it up, now that you've given the reference. Thanks again.

Other odds and ends:

When I said we will be poor in retirement I naturally meant it only in a relative sense, in that we shall have to learn to get along on a fraction of what I have been making in recent years. By all but cash standards we are rich and know it, in good health, interested in all manner of things and especially in each other. It is simply that we shall have to be very careful.

And when I spoke about the AP having a tropism for locating its bureaus in ptomaine areas I was referring to the part of town where it invariably settles, where there are NO good restaurants and especially none open at the hours I have worked for 20 years. Of course San Francisco has good restaurants, but they are mostly very overpriced and in my opinion somewhat overrated.

I object to writing sports because there are so many much more important things to occupy an adult. This area is a major sports center, with two pro teams each for baseball and football, one basketball, one hockey, and two Pacific 8 teams each in football, basketball, baseball, track and swimming, plus two smaller collegiate leagues in all these events, not to mention independent schools like San Jose State and University of the Pacific. There have been times when San Francisco AP, with one sports writer, has produced more copy than New York, which has about 15 sports writers. This means that the regular staff has to fill in most of the time and on the night shift particularly I would say we devote from 50 to 75 per cent of our

time and effort to this adolescent nonsense. Much of it is consumed in handling the statistical material, such as baseball and basketball boxes and football scoring summaries, statistics and so on. All has to be handled on a urgent basis. The sad thing is that, I am convinced, no one really is all that interested in this crap except sports editors on newspapers, who have a good thing going and are not about to let go. It beats having to think about something serious.

I do share your interest in jazz. When I was growing up, radio was new and I was entranced by the beat and ingenuity of the early bands like Coon-Sanders. When I went to the university, I was able to take some voice and other music courses and was able to develop my voice somewhat, singing all four years in the glee club and two as first tenor in the varsity quartet. At the same time I was singing at a local radio station (the pianist was a genius and could transpose extemporaneously from any key into other key to suit my voice range) and this paid much of my way through school, although I was slinging hash at a restaurant for one meal a day the while. The last two years I was able to work with a college band, mostly announcing them on the radio but also doing some singing with them, and even in those days the musicians were smoking marijuana to string out their sense of time and make rapid passages easier to execute. But although unable to play any instrument but a ukelele and pick out a melody on the piano, I did learn some of the interesting angles of jazz and was thoroughly addicted to it. This was one of the few things I missed in China, but at Yenching musical activity continued with choral work involving Handel and Bach, and in 1939 on a trip to Japan I picked up some Benny Goodman quartet records and more notably a whole selection of the Hot Club du France which were highly prized, and, of course, lost when the war cost us everything we had. The LP thing after the war in this country enabled me to get acquainted again somewhat with jazz, particularly Fats Waller, and always enjoy it. But none so much as a good jam session that is spontaneous and joyful. The late Tiger Doodle, our musical cat, was equally fond of good jazz. Ordinarily he would shake his paw and walk out of the house if you played anything later than Mozart. He confirmed my belief that jazz musicians are the spiritual descendants of Bach and Buxtehude and Vivaldi. Free and inventive and always in love with the magic things they do.

To answer another question, I don't know whether the Ch'in dynasty book burning was the first, but as I recall the accounts it probably was the most extensive and far-reaching of any. At least I never have heard of such a concerted attempt to wipe out a whole culture. It failed, on the whole, but it left its mark in the form of fuzzy pre-Ch'in history.

Another word about flying saucers. It goes without saying that the vast majority of reports are mistakes by people who misinterpret natural phenomena which seem strange at the time. And some are phonies. But some also are reported by honest, conscientious, even expert people who have no reason to dissemble and in fact report what they see at the risk of ridicule or much worse. I was riding the news wires in 1947 when they first burst upon the public consciousness, and it was clear that the first reports were genuine and that the subsequent denials and cover-ups were evasions and lies. For their own reasons, the media chose to go along with the official line. Yet the sightings have continued through the years at a surprising rate, which cannot be realized without continued contact with the stream of literature, books, news letters and so on which circulate in a sort of underground that is officially ignored.

How do you think we became conditioned to discern the official lies and obfuscations when the assassinations came along ? It is no accident that NO one interested in UFOs believes the official posture on the assassinations. He's been there before, heard and seen exactly the same thing many times over about UFOs, which have been the subject of a whole series of Warren Reports, not just one.

The official treatment of both is strikingly parallel. Even the same people are involved in some cases. Notably the CIA, although it has gone to incredible lengths to disguise its role and probably by this time has been able to shunt the job off on to a special and supersecret agency which does nothing else but evaluate the situation and periodically sponsor another official study which reassures everyone that these things may exist but probably don't and let's all get back to our TV. Apparently within the last decade it has been decided on high that these things are not hostile from the standpoint of national security. You can imagine what would happen to military appropriations in Congress if it were admitted publicly that UFOs not only exist but come from somewhere besides this planet, employ means of propulsion far beyond our ability to understand much less match, and that in short we have no capacity whatever to stop their coming.

In any case, this decision that UFOs pose no national security threat has enabled the Air Force to divest itself of the role it once had of reporting and evaluating this embarrassing phenomenon and get on with its normal business of driving airplanes and more lately running a war machine. So the situation is less tense now, but still one of official coverup -- and don't think that the very highest echelons of government don't know EXACTLY what is going on,because the rigidity of the rules under which the armed forces report on these things is matched only by the fierce secrecy which is enforced at the same time.

But increasingly, prominent scientists are getting interested and involved in the quasi-underground reporting organizations, and they follow a long series of Weisbergs who have kept the subject alive and reported in a largely unevaluated mass of information that has been accumulating since 1947. Much of the research has been done from histories and accounts preceding 1947, going clear back to the earliest times in recorded history. UFOs are anything but new.

If the field has had many Weisbergs, it also has had its full share of Spragues, Lanes and outright charlatans, including the religious variety who have recognized the powerful attraction of such an exotic subject.

One of the real scientists who is expressing his interest in public is Dr. Alan Hynek of Northwestern University, who for years was the Air Force's tame astronomer as consultant to the Air Force's coverup program. Now he has written a book (there have been many others before him) which says simply that UFOs unquestionably exist and outlines the scientific approaches that must be made to learn who they are, where they come from and how they get here.

Such books, some of them also by scientists (and there have been mysterious early deaths among a few who were more effectively outspoken) have been appearing since 1947. And long before that there was a newsman in New York named Charles Fort who in the 1920s made a frightful nuisance of himself by combing old files and astronomical journals for unexplainable things like fireballs, giant ships in the sky and similar phenomena. They go back clear to pre-history, but

Fort was the first to bring out the fact of the great surge of such sightings in the 1870s. I personally think this may have been brought on by the artificial generation of electricity. The second great wave has come since 1947, after we began setting off explosions involving nuclear fission and fusion. During World War II there were the strange foo fighters which tagged around our planes over Europe and Japan, but these appear to have been remote-controlled probes, possibly to see just what the hell we were doing to each other now. Even that early, I felt that something very unusual was going on, but it was not until the big rush in 1947 that I decided something REALLY unworldly was happening.

In the years since then the patterns of ridicule, denial and dissembling to discredit uncomfortable problems like this were worked out and used over and over. At first, I think, officialdom was properly terrified, but in recent years appears to have calmed down and to be handling the problem much more skilfully and with infinitely more sophistication. When the assassinations occurred, all they did was follow the well-tested pattern.

Fort, by the way, once told a friend in the 1920s, a very old lady now who still lives in San Francisco, "I think we're property." He could be as near to the actual truth as anyone. When you think of the inability of the evolutionists to explain the enormous gap between the apes and man, and consider the phenomenon of the Sasquatch and the Abominable Snowman, you can't help wondering. I used to know in Peking the American geologist who was head of the Chinese Geological Survey. He said that when the stratigraphy and paleontology of China is integrated with that known about the rest of the world, that it is clear that this planet has undergone at least five holocausts, through millions of years, during which it is very doubtful if any living thing could survive -- such things as another planet passing too close in space and pulling the earth's crust after it like the wrinkled skin of a rotten orange,, shifting the poles and in general making a whole new start mandatory. Perhaps not only we, but many species of animal and plant life, have been colonized.

Thanks very much for your offer in your #30 for the facilities available about double exemptions for this year. This is quite new and strange to us, and if Lil can explain what you're talking about we would indeed be most interested and grateful. I've been doing our tax returns all along and getting along pretty well, but with the complete change in status coming up I have been thinking about going to a tax consultant this time to find out what we can take advantage of. I probably still will do so, but if Lil has any happy ideas for a salaried person changing to a basis of pension and Social Security, meanwhile setting up as a kind of freelance operation, we would certainly welcome suggestions and be better able to ask the right questions here. Thanks millions, and I'm aware that Lil already has plenty to do.

Best,

jdw